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NEWS RELEASE

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CITY OF RIVERSIDE OBTAINS CONVICTION FOR FALSE CLAIM AGAINST THE CITY

On October 30, 2003, the Riverside County Superior Court convicted Juan Diego Robledo (21) of filing a false claim against the Riverside Police Department. The felony conviction for violation of Penal Code section 72 is a rare occurrence. Robledo was sentenced to 300 days in jail and three years formal probation after pleading guilty to filing the false claim. Robledo was also ordered to reimburse the City of Riverside for all of its attorney's fees and costs to defend the civil suit.

City Attorney Greg Priamos remarks, "This conviction sends a strong message that false claims filed against public entities will not be tolerated. This should not deter people from filing legitimate claims by any means. However, this was blatant fraud and we are pleased with the outcome."

The sentencing marks the culmination of a case launched on March 2, 2000, when a tort claim was filed with the City of Riverside on behalf of Robledo asserting that two Riverside police officers assaulted the defendant on January 15, 2000, fracturing his right hand and fingers. The assault allegedly took place while officers were arresting the defendant on suspicion of vandalism. Robledo sought \$1.3 million in damages.

The City of Riverside rejected the claim and Robledo filed suit against the City and the Riverside Police Department. After the civil case was dismissed, the City of Riverside pursued criminal charges against Robledo for filing the false claim.

The defendant's attorney dropped the claim due to "issues of causation" after seeing a doctor's report that indicated the defendant's injuries had been caused by hitting a wall. A review of medical records obtained from the Riverside County Regional Medical Center substantiated this statement, and another suspect questioned by law enforcement in the vandalism incident recalled that prior to being stopped by the police on January 15, he had noticed the defendant's right hand was swollen and bruised.

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